DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 274 HE 019 792

AUTHOR Lee, Helen C.
TITLE The College Teacher's Word Processor Tasks.
PUB DATE [86]
NOTE 11p.
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Computer Oriented Programs; Higher Education; Resumes (Personal); Revision (Written Composition); *Word Processing; *Writing (Composition); Writing for Publication

ABSTRACT

Word processing can assist college teachers in writing and revising lecture notes, syllabi, vitas, bibliographies, and manuscripts. Disks can also provide notes for students who cannot avoid missing lectures. Electronic changes in materials provide an efficient and quick way to revise instructional materials, add items to bibliographies, and update vitas. Promotion and tenure applications require a complete account of the teacher's professional activities and publications for his or her vita. Elements of the professional history suitable for one audience may be irrelevant for presentation to another group. The word processor makes possible insertion or deletion of items anywhere in the text. Items can be reordered to fit specifications imposed by a journal or grant proposal. The word processor makes possible a simple process of brainstorming, outlining resulting ideas, and organizing them into a text for publication. A disk file of ideas can be recorded with the word processor, and from time to time, the teacher can scroll through the ideas and add thoughts. Main headings can be placed together to form an outline to use in developing a coherent paper. Finally, use of the word processor frees the college teacher from extensive dependence on secretaries. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED275274

THE COLLEGE TEACHER'S WORD PROCESSOR TASKS

Abstract

Helen C. Lee

The word processor expedites the commonplace tasks of the college teacher: writing and revising lecture notes, vitas, syllabi, and bibliographies. It provides a way to assist class absentees. A simple process of brainstorming, outlining resulting ideas, and organizing them into a text for publication on the word processor supplies an acceptable substitute for an expensive and complicated commercial idea processor like THINKTANK. Use of the word processor frees the college teacher from extensive dependence on secretaries. Amid enjoyment of the more sophisticated opportunities the computer provides to college teachers, novices and experienced computer users alike, should exploit the many uses of the word processor to ease minor professional drudgery.

Key words: word processor, lecture noted, vitas, bibliographies, brainstorm, outlining, text.

HE019 792

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Helen C. Lee

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

THE COLLEGE TEACHER'S WORD PROCESSOR TASKS

Fascination with exotic chores the computer performs should not obscure use of the computer for mundane and commonplace activities the technology provides for college teachers. Do you use your processor to hasten completion of all the little drudgeries of your professional work? Check yourself on these tasks.

Your lecture notes are neatly typed on cards or laminated half-sheets. Exponential increases in and accessibility of knowledge in every field increases likelihood that lecture notes need more frequent revision than in the past. As you lecture, you think of apt examples or applications. Reading professional journals, you see a tidbit of fresh research supporting the thesis of a current lecture. To jog memory and ensure against forgotten details, you scribble notes on the back or in margins of lecture cards. In either case, integration of new material into lecture notes is awkward.

Sometimes the new idea is a seminal one that deserves more space for commentary to clinch it. A clarifying example that suddenly occurs to you and is used in mid-lecture may even be lost before you can add it to your latest article or develop

it fully if it is not noted down when it comes to thought. You reassure yourself you will remember needed changes when the time comes to use them but forget to do so, or scribbles in the margins meant as reminders become meaningless by the time you are ready to use them.

Performing changes on note cards is easy if they are on disk as well. Clip changes or additions to each note card or half sheet. If the notes are not only on cards but on disks, they are ready for quick revision and a new printout. Retype only the changes. Insert each in its proper place and print an updated version before using the notes again another semester or with another class. Serendipitously, you may find that, as you add new ideas, you expand nuggets of thought already in the notes, exploring fresh views because it is so easy. You may even find the genesis of a publishable article in ideas gathered, rearranged, and explored for and in lecture notes. Physical efforts of revision and retyping on a typewriter, on the other hand, freeze enthusiasm for redoing notes and dampen creativity.

You have absent students. Often absences are unavoidable. Absentees have several options. They can get another student's notes. These might be

inadequate or misleading. If another's notes are unavailable, a student may ask a classmate to tape your lecture. This works if the tape recorder performs well and the tape is flipped at the proper time so that nothing is lost. But it may not be appropriate from your point of view to have your notes lecture taped. Or a student may not be available to do the taping.

If notes are on disk, you can either print a copy for the absentee or lend a copy of your disk with notes to be viewed in the computer lab. If there is material on the disk you do not want the student to have, it is the work of moments to delete it on the student copy of the disk or on the printout without disturbing the original.

Like most college teachers, you constantly revise syllabi, vitas, and bibliographies. If these are on disk, tedious aspects of revision are avoided. Electronic changes in syllabi mean retyping only the changes---added materials, and assignments---or deleting less effective parts. Using different forms of the syllabus for students contracting for different grades is easy. Only differences need to be retyped and inserted. You can make changes at the last minute, since alterative forms of text require a minimum of work. Your secretary does

not have to do extensive retyping but can simply put your printout into the thermofax and ditto or photocopy.

You need to keep an exhaustive account of your professional activities, presentations, and publications for your vita. Promotion and tenure applications require exhaustive completeness. But, if you are an active presenter at conferences, your vita must be up to date at all times, so that those who introduce you have materials they need to do their job. A professional vita always records the latest information first. However, elements of your professional history suitable for one audience may be quite irrelevant for your presentation to another group. The same is true for vitas accompanying papers you submit for publication or those you prepare for grant applications. Varying situations call for abbreviating or expanding the data. Frequently, editors or grant foundations demand idiosyncratic formats.

In days before the word-processor, producing an updated or partial vita meant either retyping the whole vita for each new item or leaving out the latest work. The word processor makes possible insertion or deletion of items anywhere in the text, shrinking the update process from hours to minutes. Items can be reordered to fit specifications imposed

by a journal or grant proposal. Relevant parts can be separated out and printed.

Similarly, you can update bibliographies, inserting each new item in its alphabetical position and avoiding sloppy addenda updates. From a master bibliography, you can extract abbreviated listings, reorder items, regroup them under different headings, and print results without disturbing the original list.

Sometimes it is an advantage to have students see what they are hearing. You can provide this opportunity by writing either on the board or an overhead transparency as you speak. Or you can write the text in advance and project it on the overhead or an opaque projector. The computer offers another option. Put lectures on a disk and use several large monitors or a large computer projector to scroll along as you speak.

The college teacher, expected to publish in the midst of a busy schedule of speaking at conferences and teaching, needs to facilitate writing chores as much as possible. Ideas for journal articles often come when there is little time to pursue and polish them. Ideas accumulate in the midst of experimentation when scheduled care of the experiment takes all available time. Of course, you may choose to learn the complex requirements of an "idea processor"

like THINKTANK, which orders and organized random thoughts into an outline.

If you want a simpler resource, try this. Amid busy activities, set aside brief moments for short brainstorming sessions, recording with the word processor a disk file of ideas to develop later. Write your hypotheses or theoretical constructs, to which you will add supporting data as you develop it over days or months. From time to time, scroll through what you have written as new ideas emerge or developments occur in your research. Add thoughts that emerge. Leave space between sentences.

Eventually, when ideas are ready to assemble into a coherent paper, scroll down the brainstorm ideas and select main headings. Place these at the bottom of the list of ideas. Then remove each brainstorm sentence or phrase to a place under the proper heading. When each sentence has moved to its place under a heading, the main headings have reached the top of the first page. Brainstorm ideas have been fitted into a rough outline. Recheck each placement of ideas and main headings. If necessry, change placements again. At this point, an outline is ready to guide writing of your paper.

Move down the outline, making sentences and paragraphs from items until they vanish into the

text. Add blank lines as needed for textual transformation of the outline. When your textual transformation is finished, both brainstormed ideas and the outline have become sentences and paragraphs, and a rough draft is complete. Put it away to ripen a bit. Take it out in a month and edit it. If your ideas reflect quality research, you will probably have a publishable text.

Your writing style may call for writing complete text at a sitting, firing ahead in the heat of ideas that rush into thought as you write. Follow this style if it yields a good product for you. The revisons often necessary for the success of such a style is easy to accomplish on the computer. You may write into your text, successively, several different ways of saying the same thought as you go along, deleting the least effective ones when you edit later.

Have you had a manuscript returned to you with suggestions for editing and request for changes, often with a near deadline to meet? Changes are facilitated if you kept the piece on disk, where you execute desired changes and speedily return a printout to the editor. This process lightens the tedium of cut-paste-retype editing of a manuscript, whose fresh interest for you has been submerged

in new research and ideas in the many months since you first submitted it for publication.

If you have been using a word processor to create the text of manuscripts, you may have learned to enjoy improvements you can achieve in the finished text by editing from multiple printout trials. Even careful screen editing does not produce ideas for improvement that come from reading through thoughtfully an updated paper copy. Studying interim printouts, the writer responds creatively. Printed trials give insight into how the published paper will appear in print, inspiring useful polishing touches that a handwritten, cut-and-pasted or multiply-marginated copy does not stimulate. This is especially true if you are addicted to overlong or excessively complicated sentences. On handwritten or cut-and-pasted copies, these abberations do not at once call attention to themselves. On neat, printed copy, they are immediately noticeable. Reading messy copy is laborious, and the reader becomes adjusted to inching along with many stops and starts. The editing reader of neatly printed copy is used to speeding along as a real reader would do and at once notices awkward sentences that delay understanding. Multiple printed updates were rarely available to the college teacher-writer before the coming of the word processor.

Using a word processor frees the college writer from dependence on a secretary. Your own wordprocessed work can frequently be thermofaxed and dittoed or photocopied as it stands, and you can avoid use of a secretary altogether. When you do use secretarial help, your neat printout supplies the secretary with good copy for retyping. Your secretary produces faster, better final copies when better draft copies come from you.

So, amid the general delight of faculty who are using real-time data-collecting devices, making esoteric enquiries of dozens of scholarly data bases, and conducting "what if" explorations with spreadsheets, let's not forget the humbler chores of the college teacher which can be expedited and eased for both computer novice and computer sophisticate by the word processor.